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ment, is in the nature of a concluding essay and gives the author's interpretation of the results of the land policy in connection with the peopling of the West.

Such topics as "speculation", "squatters", and "pre-emption" are treated incidentally, sometimes well, sometimes not so well. On the whole the reader will be likely to get a good idea of the force of the West in these matters though mainly from the author's statements rather than from evidence presented.

Mechanically the book is attractive but far from perfect. Probably the usefulness is not impaired by the statement that "Bancroft" will be referred to as "Ban." and "Miscellaneous" as "Misc.", though the device is not always followed, but not so much can be said for the errors in citations. Out of some half-dozen references, which the writer had occasion to use, two were found to be wrong. The reference to the *Annals* on page 67 should read 429, and on page 373, note 2, 469, in place of 629 and 409 respectively.

The bibliography is well selected and the index good. Altogether the book is an acceptable contribution on an important subject.

BENJAMIN HORACE HIBBARD.

*A History of the People of the United States, from the Revolution to the Civil War.* By JOHN BACH McMASTER, University of Pennsylvania. Volume VII., 1841-1850. (New York: D. Appleton and Company. 1910. Pp. xxii, 641.)

IN the decade covered by this volume the sentiment for national expansion converted the demand for slavery extension into a pivot around which all the other questions at issue, political, social, and ecclesiastical, began to revolve. In the Mexican War the slave power won its greatest victory and laid the mine that wrought its own destruction. With due appreciation of the meaning of that critical struggle for territorial expansion the author devotes to it more than half of this book.

The first two chapters, however, describe the final results of the financial panic that overthrew Van Buren in 1840. These chapters should be read with chapters LXV., LXVIII., and LXX., in volume VI. They tell the story of hard times, "shinplaster currencies", riots against banks and brokers, and the progress of bankruptcy and repudiation on the part of eight states of the Union, until the tariff of 1842 opened a new chapter of economic history.

In the chapters, four in number, depicting social conditions in all parts of the country during the forties, Professor McMaster reveals his best gifts. He is not a painter of portraits, but he is skilful in depicting the panorama of a nation or a generation. The picture here unrolled is a rich one: the beginnings of cheap newspapers and of the telegraph, the queer delusions and extraordinary growth of Millerism and still more of Mormonism, the influence of slavery upon Southern society, the various efforts for social and political betterment from Fourierism and

prison reform to the whimsical "Dorr War" and the organization of the underground railroad, the national pike with its westward-moving throngs, the formless but growing cities, and through them passing here and there the figures of alien observers, keenly aware of the discomforts of travel and the scarcity of good hotels, and noting with none too friendly eyes the crudities and inconsistencies of our people.

In such a storehouse of information, it may seem ungracious to ask for more, but surely it is to be regretted that nothing is said concerning the history of American churches, excepting the two eccentricities above mentioned. In this period the lines of ecclesiastical cleavage over slavery were deepening, but the author ignores them. In connection with the Dorr War if it was advisable to refer at all to the case of *Luther v. Borden* (p. 178) it was surely worth while to explain it. In narrating the conclusion of the Anti-Rent war in New York the author continues a story begun in the previous volume (VI. 520-524). He quotes from newspaper authority, but not from the files of the acknowledged organ of the Anti-Renters, the *Albany Freeholder* (1845-1854). Possibly the extraordinary political influence of the Anti-Rent controversy upon local politics for a generation or more is not clearly appreciated. It is somewhat surprising to find Professor McMaster referring to one of the Polk family (p. 356) as a "signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence", a phrase which is either strangely careless or strangely provocative.

The treatment of the socialist movements in this decade is surely too much abbreviated. A description of a Fourierist phalanx and a paragraph about the Icarians do less than justice to the importance of the various new social gospels. Of the seventy odd social experiments described in Noyes's *History of American Socialism*, more than half were born and flourished in this decade of the forties.

But the chief epic of the decade is well told and with unusual detail in its salient features. The curtain rises upon the drama of Texas and Mexico with a delineation of different efforts of the American giant to thrust out his boundaries: the Webster-Ashburton treaty, settling the disputes about the Maine boundary which in the Aroostook War had almost brought on hostilities with Great Britain, the new tides of emigration towards Oregon and California in 1842-1846, and the gradual accomplishment of the annexation of Texas in 1844-1845. Then follow the events of the war, the annexation of northern Mexico, with the resultant challenge to the slaveholding expansionists in the Wilmot Proviso, and the formation of a Free-Soil party.

One chapter disentangles from the fabric of Central American and British relations the threads on which the hope of an interoceanic canal was strung, and the final chapter tells the oft-repeated but always thrilling story of the rush for Californian gold.

The uncertainties of Polk and his advisers in dealing at long range with a rapidly shifting situation are clearly and admirably illustrated. It

is evident that the President hoped to buy what no Mexican government, secure or insecure, would or could sell, because it touched the national honor. Our race has never understood either the pride or the courtesy of the Spanish blood. Until we do, we shall seem to our Southern neighbors to be rude barbarians. In discussing annexation and the Wilmot Proviso controversies, Professor McMaster enters very fully, as is his wont, into analyses of Congressional debates and newspaper articles, a mode of exposition to which he is much inclined, and which is employed here with more moderation and greater skill than in some of the preceding volumes.

Between Dr. Schouler's and Professor McMaster's accounts of this epoch of national growth the dissimilarities are more marked than the resemblances. Indeed the two historians are almost complementary to each other. Although the latter has profited by the use of sources, especially with reference to Texan history, that have but recently come within reach, it is still true that the outline of facts is substantially unaltered. It is the management of the perspective that differs.

Schouler turns the light upon a procession of masterful leaders; McMaster, upon a stream of events. Schouler's pages give little impression of life in the nation. He seeks it at Washington, in the committee-rooms of the Capitol. McMaster aims to portray the obscure motions of the popular will—or wills—which politicians are eager to discover and obey. And yet to realize his aim, should not McMaster study state histories and vivify local political and social forces far more than he has done?

Schouler presents the psychology of political leaderships; McMaster the sequences of actual progress. The one is the more incisive and epigrammatic; the other more coherent and lucid. Schouler's canvas is so crowded with personalities that it runs the risk of confusion. What McMaster's picture loses in brilliancy, it gains in clearness by concentrating attention upon a few factors, the organization of emigration, the clash of social interests, the progress of diplomacy and legislation.

He makes clear what the modern judgment of the Mexican War is apt to overlook, that the popular sentiment of that day, outside of New England, justified the Mexican War as the natural outcome of the long continued cruelties and misrule of the unstable Mexican government. Mexico was condemned as a barbarous neighbor, like Spain in Cuba fifty years later, but Cuba did not, like Mexico, possess a large colony of Americans to abuse and quarrel with. Even in New England, Connecticut remembered that the Austins and their first associates were Yankee emigrants and regarded itself as a motherland of Texas. From that Yankee settlement came the effort of certain Texan Abolitionists to swing the Lone Star republic to the side of free labor and to win the friendly support of Great Britain by such a policy. The effort served chiefly to awaken and unify Southern sentiment for annexation under the guise of patriotic resistance to the covert hostility of England.

There are six maps to illustrate the Mexican War, one to show the

"Mosquito Kingdom", and one to present the railways and overland routes in the United States in 1850. All these maps, and particularly the last two, seem somewhat stinted in size and therefore are not as clear as they should be. The last one is especially inadequate. Its two topics might better have been treated separately, and other maps or diagrams to illustrate immigration and the westward movement of our frontier would not have been amiss.

CHARLES H. LEVERMORE.

*John Brown, 1800-1859: a Biography Fifty Years After.* By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD, A.M., Litt.D. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1910. Pp. xvi, 738.)

A most painstaking, judicial, finely humane book, as might be expected from a personality in whose fibre is commingled heredity from a great business leader and one of the noblest of philanthropists. The investigation is minute and the conclusions reached in every case verified by references to authorities. Mr. Villard tags his facts with their authentications as a careful shopkeeper tags his merchandise with the price-marks. As regards every essential statement we are in no doubt as to the base on which it rests, and the bases are good. The inferences are drawn with nice discrimination; the detail is as nearly exhaustive as the most exacting reader can require; the temper, while sympathetic, is sane and impartial. We have in this portrayal a John Brown never out of his wits though his wits were very circumscribed; a man of one idea, and pursuing that idea to the death with an unflinching singleness of purpose that made him blind to all other considerations. First, he gave himself for his cause, to hardship, peril, at last to the hangman's noose. Then he gave all whom he could impress. He imposed upon his wife a life of constant sorrow; he laid his devoted children in untimely, bloody graves; he shook the foundations of his country in a warfare fraught with treason and homicide; he asked of every friend the sacrifice of substance, fair-repute, and even life. American slavery must cease, what or whoever might perish. Here was a wrong so crying and fundamental that it must be ended though a generation were involved in ruin. Even in his crimes John Brown was ever the unshrinking man—a thing which cannot be said of some associates. There are very honored names which must bear a stain from their subterfuge and desertion when the crisis pressed.

Mr. Villard does not worship his hero. He declares that if Brown was a hero, it was not on account of his lawlessness and massacres, but in spite of them. As to ability he had the gravest limitations and could never have been a great leader. His work in Kansas and Virginia was abortive, ill-planned, and ill-managed. He had not in him the proper stuff of a general. This view we question. In delineating a character the parallel is a good Plutarchian expedient, and we shall resort to this